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Literary Selections.

From Putnam's Magazine.

THE FALL OF THE ALAMO.

On the twenty-third day of February, 1836, General Santa Anna entered San Antino de Bexar, and took possession of the town without firing a gun. As he advanced to the Alamo, the small garrison of one hundred and thirty men, under the command of WILLIAM BARRET TRAVIS, retired on the opposite side of the river, determined there to offer such resistance to the progress of the tyrant as their energies and resources should permit, by a direct appeal to the God of battles. Flushed with the conquest, so easily effected, of the town, the Mexican commander prepared for an immediate attack on the Alamo. He ordered breastworks to be thrown up on every commanding point, and artillery to be planted wherever it could be most effected. One battery was completed on the right bank of the river by the 25th, and without waiting for others the siege was at once commenced.

It is a dark and gloomy morning, devoted to a dark and unholy purpose. Exulting in the work of death upon which he is entering, Santa Anna crosses the river in person, and establishes his head quarters in a small stone building—yet standing—from which he may the more accurately perceive the progress of his designs, without exposing himself to his enemies. The signal is given, and before the sun has risen upon those hostile hosts, the roar of the Mexican battery awakens the echoes far and wide, and rouses from their slumbers the yet unconscious inhabitants. But the defenders of the Alamo have not for a single moment lost sight of the movements of their wily and implacable foes: they watch the studied direction of eve ry gun; they see the match lighted; they listen breathless as if even at that distance, they could hear the command to fire; and, when the walls of that citdadel tremble under the shock of the iron hail, and the fragments of the parapet are whirled aloft by the sudden impulse, they send back a shout of defiance, mingled with a discharge from their own guns as destructive, if not deafeneing, as the thunder of their assailants.

Before the smoke rolls away, and the reverberations are lost in the distance, while the shouts of the besieged still linger in the ears of the beseigers, the cannonade is resumed, and for seven hours, without pause or relaxation, fiercely continued upon the walls of the Alamo. But these walls yield no more than the spirits of their defenders. The fire is steadily returned; and, though stones are shivered around shem, there are stout hearts and willing hands ready to repair every breach, and restore from the interior whatever may have been destroyed from without. Earth is thrown up, every crack or fisure is closed as fast as created by the eager efforts of those who will permit no evidence of success to cheer the hopes of their enemies. The sun has almost sunk behind the western plains, when there is a pause in the work of demolition. The firing of the besiegers ceases for the day, with the Mexican thirst for blood unsatiated. Not a single drop has been shed within the Alamo. Many of Santa Anna's own men have bit the dust before the artillerists and riflemen of the fort; but thus far they are unavenged. Darkness falls upon the besiegers and the beseiged. The former raise new intrenchments to prosecute the assault, the latter establish a close watch for the night, and endeavor to seek that repose which shall renew their vigor for the contest which they know will come to-morrow.

The morning of the 26th dawns, and reveals to the occupants of the fort the effect of the midnight labors of their enemies in the establishment of two additional batteries within the Alemeda of the Alamo. The bayonets of the infantry which have crossed the river during the night glitter in the morhing beams, and the plumes of the cavalry are seen waving on the eastern hills to intercept the expected aid from that quarter. The contest is renewed by a slight skirmish between a small party of Texans sent in quest of wood and water and a Mexican detachment under General Sesma; but this is a mere overture to the grand performance of the day. The thunders of the heavy ordnance, under the direction of Colonel Ampudia, are soon roused into action; volley after volley is poured into the fort, and answered only, except at rare intervals, by the shouts of those within. There is no pause, no cessation. Still the cannonade goes on; shells fly hissing through the air, and balls bury themselves within the ramparts; but night comes on, and the Mexican general in vain looks for evidence of success. Baffled, but not discouraged, he advances his line of intrenchments, and prepares, with the morning light, to resume his bloody task. The north wind sweeps over the prairies, as it only sweeps in Texas, a stormy lullaby to the stormy passions of those contending hosts. The darkness is broken only by the feeble blaze of a few huts, fired by the Texans, which had furnished a cover to the enemy. The flames curled upwards with a sickly glare, and their fitful flashes threw a lurid light for a moment upon the slumbering army, and expire. The reign of darkness and of silence is restored.

The next day the Mexicans appear inactive, though engaged in the construction of additional batteries. There is but little firing on either side. Travis and his men, with spirits unsubdued and with energies weakened, butnot exhausted, are applying their contracted resources to the purposes of defence. No heart falters; no pulse throbs with diminished power; no hand shrinks from the labor necessity imposes. All is confidence and determination, and in every breast there is firm reliance, springing from the holiness of the cause and the certainity of its final triumph.

Sunday follows, but brings no rest to those whom God has created in his own image, and who, in violation of his commands are thus yielding to their erring and unhallowed passions. Perhaps within the chapel of the Alamo, consecrated to the worship of the Almighty, and distinguished by the emblem of suffering and of salvation which surmounts the dome, heads may be bowed in prayer to the God of battles for deliverance from their sanguinary foe; but that foe takes no heed of Sabbaths. Exclusive followers as they proclaim themselves of the true church, they doom to destruction the very temple they have erected for its worship; and kissing the cross suspended from their necks, and planted before every camp, they point their guns upon the symbol for which they profess such unbounded reverence. The fire of the Mexican artillery keeps company with the minutes as they roll on. Morning, midday, and evening are passed, yet there is no faltering among those who are defending the Thermopylæ of Texas liberty. Another sun rises and sets, and yet another; still the indomitable hearts of Travis and his companions quail not before the untiring efforts of their enemy. In spite of that enemy's vindictive vigilance, the little garrison receives from Gonzales a reinforcement of thirty-three men—additional victims for the funeral pyre soon to be kindled by Santa Anna on the surrounding hills, as a human hecatomb to Mexican vengeance.

New batteries are erected by the besiegers. From every point around the missiles of destruction concentrate upon the Alamo. The final hour must soon come. Provisions are not yet exhausted, but the ammunition cannot last many days longer. Water had long been supplied solely by the daring efforts of a Mexican woman, who through showers of grape and musketry, has threaded the way to and fro between the river and the citidel, while her own blood has marked the path. She bears within her the stern and lofty spirit of her illustrious ancester, stretched upon the racks of Cortez and it is not the fear of tortue or death that can swerve her from her purpose.

The siege has continued for ten days. The Mexican General has received large reinforcements, and his army now numbers thousands. He has been unceasing in his efforts to batter down the walls, but has thus far failed. The triumph is with Travis; but it is written in the heart of his ruthless foe that he must die; and when the cannonade is suspended on the 6th of March a small breach has been effected, and Santa Anna has determined without a summons to surrender, that the hour for the assault has arrived. During ten days a blood red flag has been streaming from the spire of the church in San Antonio, proclaiming that no quarter is to be given to the champions of the Alamo—that blood alone will appease the vengeance of fury of Mexican malice.—When the sun again goes down the flag is no longer seen, for the deed for which it was the sign has been accomplised.

It is midnight; stars are smiling in the firmament, and the repose of Paradise seems hovering over the armed hosts, and hills and plains which encircle the Alamo. The calm is so deep and solemn that the angel of death seemed to pause before the strife and carnage which are to follow. A low murmur rises upon the air, which gradually becomes more and more distinct. Lights are glancing mysteriously in the distance, and indicate some unusual movement. The besieging army is in motion. There is no advance by columns. The force of the Mexicans is so great that the fort may be completely surrounded, leaving intervals only for the fire of artillery. The place is girdled by a deep line of infantry, and these are hemmed in and encompassed by another cavelry. If the first falter or shrink they must be thrust forward to the assault by the sabers and lancers of their comrades. Suddenly the batteries are in a blaze, and from their concentric positions pour forth raddii of fire from the circle of Santa Anna's vengeance verging to a single center. Amid the thunders thus created their own shouts hardly less terrible, and the martial blast of a hundred bugles, the Mexicans advance to the Alamo. A sheet of flame from rifles that never failed, is the answer to the charge. The infantry recoil and fall back upon the cavalry, their ranks broken and disordered by the deadly fire of the besieged. The shouts from the fort are mingled with the groans of the wounded and dying on the plain while the officers are endeavoring to reform their scattered masses. They return to the attack, but the leaden shower which they again encountered fells them to the earth by platoons.

Travis shows himself on the walls, cheering his cool undaunted followers. Around him are Crockett, Evans, and Borham, roused to the last struggle, for they know their doom is sealed. In quick succession the rifle is discharged, sending hundreds to their long account. The Mexicans are again repulsed; they fall back dismayed and disheartened by the dead and dying around them. The battallion of Toluca, the flower of Santa Anna's army is reduced from four hundred to twenty three. Men have become for a moment regardless of their officers and are almost delirious from the cries of anguish of their fallen and expiring comrades, yielding to the influence which no discipline can restrain and no efforts repress. But the breach now appears practicable; the disjointed force, by the aid of threats and entreaties, are rallied, and once more return to the assault.—The fire from the Alamo has for some time been growing slower and slower.—Rifles have dropped from many a vigorous hand, now cold in death, while others cling to their weapons even in the angonies of dissolution. Ammunition, too, has been failing; one by one the muzzles drop; and ere the last rifle is loaded and discharged, the Mexicans gain the wall. Fearfully conspicuous in that awful moment Travis receives a shot, staggers, and falls. He dies not unavenged. A Mexican officer rushes upon him and is about to plunge his saber into the bosom of the fallen man, when gathering his remaining energies for a desperate effort, he bathes the sword to which he still clings in the blood of his enemy and they die together.

In the meantime the conflict has become hand to hand, and has been raging hot and thick. The Mexicans have poured into the citadel like famished wolves furious for their prey. Each man struggles with his adversary with the energy of despair, dealing the death stroke with rifles, sabres, or whatever missiles may be within reach. The Texans are almost buried beneath the numbers of their opponents. The carnage has been so terrible that the slain are piled up in heaps. Death stares each survivor in the face, yet still he struggles on. Crocket has been conspicuous in the melee wherever the blows fell hotest and fastest. He has forced his way over piles of the dead bodies of his enemies, and has reached the door of the chapel. Here he determines to make his last stand. At one glance of his eye he sees that the fate of the Alamo rests upon himself alone, and that fate nothing can avert.

Travis has fallen. Evans is no more. Bowie expires upon a bed of sickness, pierced to the heart by a Mexican bayonet; Borham falls directly before him, and he finds himself the only living warrior of the one hundred and sixty-three who had been his companions. Perhaps at that moment the life blood creeps to his heart by a natural impulse; but it is only for a moment. The desperation of his position sends it back with the force of an avalanche. His foes glare on him with the fierceness of demons, and assault him with blows from muskets, lances and sabers. The strength of a hundred men seems concentrated in his single arm, as he deals out death to his pitiless and unsparing assailants. Their bodies have grown into a rampart before him. Blackened with fire and smoke, besmeared with blood, and roused into frenzy, he stands like some fable god of antiquity, laughing to scorn the malice and the power and the fury of his enemies. New fire flashes from his eye, and new vigor nerves his arm. On his assailants rush but it is upon death, certain and immediate. They fall but the places are still supplied, and so quickly the dead seem to rise up before him like armed men from the teeth of Cadmus. At length a ball from an unseen rifle pierces him in the forehead; he falls backward to the earth in the streams of gore which curdle around him. No groan escapes his lips, no cry of agony gratifies the implacable rancor of his enemies. He dies, and the Alamo has fallen.

THE MOUNTAINS TREMBLED.

"I might devote half a volume to a description of the fantastic and incomprehensible arrangements of those rocks and their viens; but all that is necessary for the general reader to know or remember is this broad fact of the *undulation* of their whole substance. For there is something, it seems to me, inexpressibly marvellous in this phenomenon, largely looked at. It is to be remembered that these rocks are the rocks which, on the average, will be oftenest observed, and with the greatest interest, by the human race. The central granites are too far removed, the lower rocks too common, to be carefully studied; these slaty crystallines form the noblest hills that are easily accessible, and seem to be thus calculated especially to attract observation and reward it. Well, we begin to examine them; and, first, we find a notable hardness in them, and a thorough boldness of general character, which makes us regard them as very types of rocks. They have nothing of the look of dried earth about them, nothing petty or limited in the display of their bulk.—Where they are, they seem to form the world; no mere bank of a river here, or a lane there, peeping out among the hedges or forests; but from the lowest valley to the highest clouds, all is theirs—one adamantine dominion and rigid authority of rock. We yield ourselves to the impression of their external, unconquerable stubbornness of strength; their mass seems the least yielding, least to be softened, or in anywise dealt with by any external force, of all earthly substances. And, behold, as we look farther into it, it is all touched and troubled, like waves upon a summer breeze; rippled far more delicately than seas or lakes are rippled; *they* only undulate along their surface—this rock trembles through its very fibre, like the chords of an Æolian harp—like the stillest air of spring with the echoes of a child's voice. Into the heart of these great mountains,—through every tossing of their boundless crests, and deep beneath all their unfathomable defiles, flows that strange quivering of their substance. Other and weaker things seem to express their subjection to an infinite power only by momentary terrors: as the weeds bow down before the feverish wind, and the sound of the going in the tops of the taller trees passes on before the clouds, and the fitful opening of pale spaces on the dark water, as if some invisible hand were casting dust upon it, gives warning of the anger that is to come, we may well imagine that there is indeed a fear passing upon the grass, and leaves and waters, at the presence of some great spirit commissioned to let the tempest loose; but the terror passes, and their sweet rest is perpetually restored to the pastures and the waves. Not so to the mountains. They, which at first seem strengthened beyond the dread of any violence or change, are yet also ordained to bear upon them the symbol of a perpetual fear; the tremor which fades from the soft lake and gliding river is sealed to all eternity, upon a rock; and while things that pass visibly from birth to death may sometimes forget their feebleness, the mountains are made to possess a perpetual memorial of their infancy—that infancy which the prophet saw in his vision: 'I beheld the earth, and lo! it was without form, and void, and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld mountains, and lo! they *trembled*; and all the hills *moved lightly*.'"

☞ Mr. Nute's church, Lawrence, K. T., is approaching completion. A clock for the tower has arrived in good condition—a fine piece of workmanship, costing $500 in this city, whence it was sent as a present. Mr. Nute preaches meanwhile in a school-room.

☞ Be temperate in all things.

From Dr. Bartlett's Anglo-Saxon.

THE JEW'S TREASURE.

"Bring forth the Jew Oglandi, that we may pass sentence of death upon him!"

The order was speedily obeyed, and soon an old, very old man, was led into the presence of Jussuf Bashaw, who was seated on his little throne in the audience hall of his palace. His form, now bent and feeble, depended on a staff to support his tottering steps—age had impaired his strength and bent him low, but the mind and will retained their firmness, opposing time and trouble.

But what was the man's crime? Why, he was a Jew—known to be a rich one—and the bashaw wanted his money, which the Jew would not give.

"Jew," said the bashaw, "reports have reached our ears that thou art in possession of great wealth."

"I have heaps of gold," promptly replied Oglandi.

"We were in need of money," continued the bashaw, "and commanded that our Hasnadar Glande should dispatch a message to you for a loan of two hundred pieces of English gold; but Mamet, our chief officer of the treasury, mistook our meaning, and sent to your house a party, who slew your children, immured you in a cell, inflicting tortures upon you. We inquired the reason of all this, and was told that you had attempted the life of a soldier, and so ordered your tortures to be renewed. This day we have learned your innocence, and now think of your restoration to freedom and ——"

"Upon what condition?" hastily interrupted the Jew, who, though knowing that all the bashaw had uttered was an untruth, still pretended to believe every word.

The bashaw did not give a direct answer, but soon said:

"Report says that you have concealed silver, gold, and jewels, enough to make, in the coin of this regency, the sum of eighteen hundred thousand yasticks.—Have you so much wealth?"

"Yes, and more!"

"Allah akbar!" said the bashaw, stroking his long beard with delight.—"You would like your freedom?" he added, inquiringly.

"As the eagle loves to soar aloft in air, the wild beast to roam unmolested through the forest, so have I always loved my freedom."

"You may have liberty on one condition, Jew."

"Name it."

"You have much wealth!" was the significant reply.

"Yes."

"You could live like a prince upon one-half of it?"

"I could."

"Give me the other half, and you shall have your freedom."

"And will you not harm me any more?" asked the Jew, eagerly.

"No, good Jew; we will shield thee from all future harm," said the bashaw, now almost beside himself with joy.—And, descending from his throne, he approached and warmly embraced Oglandi.

"What pledge wilt thou give me?" asked the Jew.

"Our princely word—nay our oath."

"By what will you swear?"

"By the sacred stone in the kaaba of the temple at Mecca—by the name of Mahomet and of ——"

"And will you keep your oath?" interrupted the Jew.

"If we do not, may we die the most horrible death man can conceive or invent."

The bashaw paused in breathless suspense, awaiting a reply, while Oglandi stood speechless as a statue.

The bashaw could no longer endure the painful silence. "Speak, good Jew," he said, "and tell us where you have your money concealed."

The Jew was immovable as marble—he weighed in his mind the value of the oath. His silence was painful to the anxious interrogator.

"Tell us!" entreated Jussuf, who was now suffering from alternate feeling of hope and fear.

Casting a strange look at the bashaw, the Jew said:

"Your excellency first said that you wanted to borrow my money; but now you want me to give it to you."

"Your liberty!" significantly replied Jussuf, who was so completely elated and assured by the Jew's actions as not to doubt that he would accept of any reasonable terms to get his freedom.

"I shall surely be set free?" again said the Jew.

"Soon as you tell where your money is to be found, and it is brought here, you shall be free."

"Your excellency knows the spot where Galil encamps?"

"Yes."

"Near half a mile east of it stands two barren date-trees——"

"We have noticed them," interrupted the bashaw.

"Between the trees is an oval stone surrounded by a bed of wild sorrel."

And he paused.

"Go on!"

"And you will surely keep but half of my riches?"

"Only half."

"Well, upon lifting upon the stone I spoke of, you will find a second one, which is flat, then a third, and a fourth one.—Raising the last stone, you will find a large hole running many feet underground."

"Yes—yes, I see."

"One day I accidentally discovered this, and thought what a good spot it would be to hide my money in."

"Enough!" said the bashaw, dancing with delight. "Allah! my empty treasury shall soon be filled!"

The bashaw now despatched a number of Turks to unearth and bring away the hidden treasures.

At the end of an hour the Turks returned, and stated that they could find no treasures there.

"How now, Jew?" asked the bashaw. "My men have searched the place and can find no money. Thou hast deceived us."

"I did not say my wealth was there."

"You wished us to believe as much."

"I said that I thought the place a good one for that purpose."

"And then you did not bury any of your riches there?"

"No—for the next day I found a better place."

"And where is it?"

"It is where neither you nor your blood-thirsty followers can find it."

The bashaw now discovered the cunning of the Jew, and that he had been caught in his own trap.

"Son of a foul Jew dog!" roared the exasperated bashaw, drawing one of the gold-mounted pistols from his belt, and tappingly it significantly.

"I fear not thy lead," said the old man, in a calm tone. Then, as if speaking to himself, he added, "Would that I had the strength of youth!"

"And what if thou hadst?"

"I would drag thee from that blood-bought throne, and dash out thy brains on this marble floor, to avenge the death of my murdered children!"

The bashaw now foamed with rage, and would have shot Oglandi dead, had not a thought, which suggested a last hope of getting possession of the Jew's money, at that moment entered his mind—he would threaten all Oglandi's race with death just at the moment the executioner should raise the axe to chop off his head.

The bashaw now sent for the high sheriff, who soon appeared, axe in hand.

The bashaw ordered him to decapitate Oglandi forthwith. The sheriff dragged the helpless victim to the block. He raised the axe, but, when about to strike, a messenger from the bashaw arrested his hand.

He addressed Oglandi.

"The bashaw," he said, "swears that if you yield not your money, he will put you to death, and every Jew in Tripoli of your blood."

"Tell the incarnate fiend," said the Hebrew, triumphantly, "that of the once numerous family of the Oglandis, I am all that remains—the last of my race!"

And breathing forth a last and fervent supplication to Heaven, the old man calmly placed his head on the block.

The axe fell, and he was no more!

THE OCEAN.

Lieutenant Maury has sent a report to the Secretary of the Navy concerning the submarine explorations made by the North Pacific Exploring Expedition under the command of Lieutenant Rodgers, and from this valuable document we take the following interesting extract:—"Deep sea soundings, with specimens of the bottom, have also been returned to this office from that expedition. They were taken in the North Pacific with Brooke's apparatus, and have been studied through the microscope of Professor Bailey at West Point. They all tell the same story. They teach us that the quiet of the grave reigns everywhere in the profound depths of the ocean; that the repose here is beyond the reach of wind—it is so perfect that none of the powers of earth, save only the earthquake and volcano, can disturb it. The specimens of deep sea soundings, for which we are indebted to the ingenuity of Lieutenant Brooke, are as pure and as free from the sand of the sea as the snow flake that falls when it is calm upon the sea is from the dust of the earth. Indeed, these soundings suggest the idea that the sea, like the snow-cloud with its flakes in a calm, is always letting fall upon its bed showers of these microscopic shells; and we may readily imagine that the 'sunless wrecks' which strew its bottom are, in the process of ages, hid under this fleecy covering, presenting the rounded appearance which is seen over the body of the traveller who has perished in the snow-storm. The ocean, especially within and near the tropics, swarms with life.—The remains of its myriads of moving things are conveyed by currents, and scattered and lodged in the course of time all over its bottom. This process, continued for ages, has covered the depths of the ocean as with a mantle, consisting of organisms as delicate as the machi frost, and as light as the undrifted snow-flake on the mountain. Wherever this beautiful sounding-rod has reached the bottom of the deep sea, whether in the Atlantic or Pacific, the bed of the ocean has been found of a down-like softness. The lead appears to sink many feet deep into the oozy matter there which has been strained and filtered through the sea water. This matter consists of the skeletons and casts of insects of the sea of microscopic minuteness. The fact that the currents do not reach down to the bottom of the deep sea; that there are no abrading agents at work there, save alone the gnawing tooth of time; that a rope of sand, if stretched upon the bed of the ocean, would be a cable strong enough to hold the longest telegraphic wire that art can draw; these, with other discoveries made in the course of the investigations carried on in the hydrographical department of this office concerning the physics of the sea, and already announced in its official publications and correspondence, are likely to prove of great practical value and importance in submarine telegraphy—a line of business only in the first stage of its infancy, but deeply interesting to the whole human family; for in its bearings and results it touches most nearly the progress of man in the march that is leading him upward and onward. The notion was that a telegraphic cable must be of great strength to resist and withstand the forces of the sea. Wereupon the conducting wire, after being coated to insulation with gutta-percha, was encased in a wire hawser or cable stout enough to hold the largest 'seventy-four' to her anchors. These cables were very expensive in their manufacture, bulky for stowage, unwieldy for handling, and difficult to lay. It was such a wire-laid cable that the Telegraphic Company lost in the laying between Newfoundland and Cape Breton, in 1855; and it is such a one—wire-laid, stiff and larger than a man's arm—that the French have twice attempted to lay in the Mediterranean, and twice lost.—But now we have learned, in the course of these investigations, that all the obstacles interposed by the sea to the laying of submarine telegraphs lie between the surface and the depth of a few hundred fathoms below; and that these are not to be mastered by force, nor overcome by that tensile strength of wire-drawn ropes, but that, with a little artifice, they will yield to a mere thread. It is the case of a man-of-war and the little nautilus in the hurricane—the one, weak in its strength, is dashed to pieces; the other, strong in its weakness, resists the utmost violence of the storm, and rides as safely through it as though there were no ragings in the sea. Therefore, it may now be considered as a settled principle in submarine telegraphy that the true character of a cable for the deep sea is not that of an iron rope as large as a man's arm, but a single copper wire, or a fascicle of wires, coated with gutta-percha, pliant and supple, and not larger than a lady's finger."

☞ Anguish of mind has driven thousands to suicide; anguish of body, none. This proves that the health of mind is of far more consequence to our happiness than the health of the body, although both are deserving of much more attention than either of them receive.—*Colton.*

"I'd rather black my visage o'er,
And put the glass on boots and shoes,
Than stand within a liquor store,
And wash the glasses drunkard's use."

John Pierpont.